

Margolis AD, MacGowan RJ, Flanigan TP, Sosman JM, Grinstead O, Dey A, Askew J, and the Project START Study Group. HIV and STD risk behavior of young men prior to incarceration. National HIV Prevention Conference; July 27–30, 2003; Atlanta, Georgia. Abstract TP-049.

**Background:** Approximately 2 million people in the United States are incarcerated. Many people entering correctional facilities have a history of substance use and risky sexual behavior, in addition to high rates of HIV and STDs. Nine out of ten inmates are eventually released and return to the community from which they came.

**Objectives:** (1) describe pre-incarceration sexual behavior and substance use of incarcerated young men; and (2) identify correlates of unprotected vaginal sex.

**Methods:** Men, 18 to 29 years of age, (N=519) were recruited and interviewed while incarcerated in state prisons located in California, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. Data were obtained from each participant on risk behaviors that had occurred before this incarceration. Logistic regression was used to identify correlates of unprotected vaginal sex during the 3 months before this incarceration.

**Results:** During the three months prior to incarceration, 71% of the men had multiple (>1) sexual partners, 66% had sex with a partner they perceived as risky (history of IDU, crack cocaine use, exchanging sex for drugs/money, multiple partners, STD, HIV+), 82% had a main female partner, 70% had a casual female partner, more than half (56%) of the men had both main and casual female sexual partners, and most (85%) had unprotected vaginal intercourse. Of the men, 72% indicated heavy alcohol use (drinking  $\geq 5$  drinks per day), and 34% drank heavily at least 3 times per week during the 3 month reporting period. During the 3 months prior to incarceration, 79% used marijuana, and 24% ecstasy or powder cocaine. In addition, 8% of the men had injected drugs during their lifetime. In logistic regression analyses, unprotected vaginal sex was associated with heavy drinking (OR, 1.74, 95% CI 1.01-3.00), having a risky sex partner (OR, 2.39, 95% CI 1.42-4.00) and using marijuana (OR, 1.89, 95% CI 1.07-3.36).

**Conclusions:** The majority of the participants engaged in behaviors that could result in HIV or STD transmission or acquisition. Effective HIV and STD prevention programs should be provided to incarcerated men, particularly to those with a history of substance abuse.